

01 September 2022, Thursday



DENR

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Manila Standard

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COURTESY CALL. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Ma. Antonia "Toni" Yulo-Loyzaga pays a courtesy call to Speaker Martin Romualdez at the Speaker's Office in the House of Representatives. **Ver Noveno**



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ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPIONS WHO LUNCH

Masungi Georeserve and the Embassy of Canada invite advocates to push for the conservation of a critical watershed area

The invitation was for a luncheon "with experts and environmental champions to discuss how to collectively address the conservation of the Masungi karst landscape, the restoration of the surrounding watershed and the protection of environment defenders." The venue was Silayan at Masungi Georeserve in Baras, Rizal, the award-winning karst limestone and forest haven that has been defended from illegal encroachers for years, mainly through the efforts of the Dumaliang family and other environmental advocates. This time, Masungi was hosting the luncheon with Canada Ambassador Peter MacArthur.

Guests were welcomed to the lovely Silayan pavilion overlooking the geopark as early as 9 a.m., and were welcomed by Masungi Georeserve Foundation's managing trustee, Ann Dumaliang. MacArthur noted how the Philippines and Canada were countries being greatly affected by climate change.

The ambassador, himself



Champions for Masungi: Ben Dumaliang and Ann Dumaliang of the Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc., Environment Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna, Secretary of the Climate Change Commission Robert Borje, Canada Ambassador Peter MacArthur, Interior Undersecretary Margarita Gutierrez, Masungi's Billie Dumaliang, Embassy of Canada second secretary Peter Wright

the son of a forester, cited how Canada has been active in employing green technology and empowering women, among other climate change mechanisms, and how the country has earmarked some P124 million for nature-based solutions for forests and mangroves in

the Philippines, in cooperation with agencies like the United Nations Development Programme, the Climate Change Commission, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Also asked to say a few words was Secretary Robert

Borje, the new head of the Commission on Climate Change, who noted how the Philippines could indeed "be a leader in this campaign, because of our experience and expertise." Things were indeed coming to a head in terms of a climate emergency, he noted, while also pointing

out how "things are happening and local people are getting involved."

Biodiversity

Wildlife biologist Nikki Realubit shared results and recommendations from research expeditions and biodiversity assessments held earlier this year, including a baseline assessment held from Jan. 18 to Jan. 25 by the nonprofit group Buhay Ilang Research, Education and Conservation Inc., that counted some 102 terrestrial vertebrates and 153 flora species in the area.

Lawyer Jose Andres Canivel of the Forest Foundation Philippines, meanwhile, spoke interestingly about the Filipinos' "schizophrenia" of knowing the importance of trees, but still using them mindlessly, as evident in the remaining 7.014 million hectares of forest cover as of 2015—less than 25 percent. Thus, he said, forests must be looked at "through the lens of resilience and ecosystem services."

The program, hosted by Daphne Oseña-Paez, concluded

with a message from Environment Secretary Toni Yulo-Loyzaga, read by Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna; a panel discussion moderated by the Canadian embassy's second secretary Peter Wright, featuring Anne Dumaliang, Realubit and Canivel; and reactions from the guests.

A lovely lunch by chef Dom Catuiran, featuring such dishes as a sumptuous adobo, *lechon*, blue-tinted *ternate* rice and refreshing *bignay* tea, preceded a half-hour walk through Masungi's Discovery Trail, where young biology teachers from the University of the Philippines-Manila pointed out interesting species, and MacArthur gamely trekked up and down paths to take in the greenery.

We gladly noted how the young government representatives, including Borje and Interior Undersecretary Margarita Gutierrez, committed to doing their part to keep the momentum going. In a beautiful place like Masungi, working together does seem like the most natural thing to do. —ALYA B. HONASAN INQ



South Korea affirms commitment to build boat to bolster Manila Bay cleanup drive

By MALOU TALOSIG-BARTOLOME

[@maloutalosis](#)

SOUTH Korea has reaffirmed its commitment to build a boat for the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) that would help clean up hundreds of thousand metric tons of marine litter in Manila Bay, an official of the South Korean Embassy in Manila said.

Lee Kyoo Ho said the pandemic has stalled the implementation of the joint project with the PCG and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to manage marine litter pollution in Manila Bay.

International studies show that the Philippines accounts for about 800,000 metric tons of plastic marine pollution annually.

The five-year program will establish a marine litter monitoring system, station a clean up vessel near Manila Bay, and enhance marine litter management capacity. The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) will fund the project, which will cost around \$7.7 million, or around P431.2 million.

"This project is scheduled to be implemented from 2021 to 2025. But due to the pandemic, it has been delayed a bit," Lee told the BUSINESS-MIRROR. "The three major components will be completed around either the end of 2025, or the beginning of 2026."

The marine cleanup vessel will be designed and built by Korean engineers. Initially, the idea is to build a 60-tonnage cleanup vessel similar to what the Korean coast guard is using.

This will augment the PCGs capacity, which only has one 2-tonnage boat doing cleanup of the Manila Bay.

"KOICA will build a guideline for maintenance of the vessel and provide vessel staff with a capacity program for maintenance," he said.

KOICA will also help the Philippines draft a policy or strategic plan to monitor marine litter in Manila Bay, which will be carried out by the national government, local government units surrounding Manila Bay and nongovernment organizations. Capacity building programs will also be designed by KOICA, DENR and PCG.

The marine litter monitoring system also includes data collection and analysis, and establishment of guidelines for marine litter management, Lee added.

"Korea is committed to strengthening its bilateral partnership with the Philippines in achieving clean, healthy and sustainable oceans by combating marine plastic pollution and securing maritime safety and security," Lee said at the sidelines of the East Asia Summit Workshop on Maritime Cooperation hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila from August 30 to September 1, 2022.

In addition, the Korea Export Import Bank (KEXIM Bank) has also pledged to finance a \$105-million project for maritime safety enhancement in Rombling and Cebu in partnership with the Philippine Department of Transportation.

The buoys are aimed at helping reduce the risks of marine accidents and eventually, protecting marine environment.

"Korea will remain committed to supporting the Philippines's initiative to promote and advance regional cooperation to keep our seas and oceans clean, healthy and sustainable," he said.



'Law on extended producer responsibility a major step in tackling plastic waste'

THE new law on extended producer responsibility (EPR) for plastic waste is a major milestone in tackling plastic waste and its implementation will succeed with sustained collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders. These are the government agencies and local government units (LGUs), manufacturers and importers, NGOs and civil society groups, and consumers and communities, said Chairman and CEO Kais Marzouki of Nestlé PH, one of the country's largest food and beverage manufacturers.

"The effective implementation of the law is urgently needed to tackle the plastic pollution crisis," he said.

Republic Act 11898, The Extended Producer Responsibility Act, of 2022, defines EPR as the environmental policy approach and practice that now requires producers to be environmentally responsible throughout the life cycle of a product, from manufacture to consumption or use, and especially to its post-consumer

try include making a full transition from plastic to paper straws. Working with the Department of Education (DepEd) and the National Solid Waste Management Commission, it has developed solid waste management modules reaching millions of students in over 20,000 public schools nationwide.

With the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, it is helping to train LGUs on solid waste management.

Through the Bear Brand Tibayanihan project, since 2016 Nestlé PH has provided over 12,000 benches and chairs made of up-cycled Bear Brand packs for 131 public schools through the DepEd. This year, another 5,000 Tibay chairs will be turned over to schools in 12 cities nationwide.

The firm has reduced its use of plastic year-on-year since the early 1990s and continues to accelerate this process. By 2025 its packaging including plastics will be 100 percent recyclable or reusable, and it will cut virgin plastics consumption by 1/3. Since 2016, all its fac-

or end-of-life stage. Large enterprises are covered, with auditing and annual compliance reports to be submitted. Plastic packaging refers to products used to carry, protect or pack goods for transportation, distribution and sale.

The law mandates establishing or phasing in EPR programs within six months, with yearly incremental target recovery rates up to 80 percent by 2028.

"At Nestlé, our purpose is unlocking the power of food to enhance quality of life, today and for generations to come. In serving people, we need natural resources and a healthy planet, and so we strive to do our share to protect the environment and ultimately help regenerate the Earth in our operations," said Marzouki.

As a voluntary form of EPR, Nestlé PH has been fully plastic neutral for two years as of this August. It has recovered over 52 million kilos of plastic waste as of last July, equivalent to the volume of plastic packaging it put out in the market.

The company's firsts in the coun-

tries have attained zero waste to landfill status.

"Plastic pollution has complex challenges that need a collective, whole of society approach. With the commitment and participation of our employees, we will strengthen our collaboration with public and private sector partners to continue breaking new ground towards a waste-free future.

"As the EPR law is implemented, we will intensify our efforts in searching for packaging alternatives while working to reduce plastic use, putting in place collection and recycling mechanisms, and mobilizing consumer involvement and participation.

"Beyond investing in sustainability practices which is integral to our business, at Nestlé we are on a journey to regeneration. An important aspect of this is helping to protect, renew and restore the environment. We are joining hands with other stakeholders to create a cleaner, healthier and more resilient planet for future generations," Marzouki said.



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BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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"Plastic pollution has complex challenges that need a collective, whole of society approach. With the commitment and participation of our employees,



The comprehensive Nestlé strategy on plastic waste covers finding packaging alternatives and reducing plastic use, building collection and recycling systems, and mobilizing consumer participation through education. Among its initiatives, Nestlé PH encourages consumers to dispose of used beverage cartons for recycling.

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Nestle calls for implementation of anti-plastic waste law

Nestle Philippines Inc. called for the effective implementation of the extended producer responsibility (EPR) law citing it as a major milestone in tackling plastic waste.

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chairman and chief executive officer of Nestlé Philippines,

"The effective implementation of the law is urgently needed to tackle the plastic pollution crisis," Marzouki added.

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"As the EPR law is implemented, we will intensify our efforts in searching for packaging alternatives while working to reduce plastic use, putting in place collection and recycling mechanisms, and mobilizing consumer involvement and participation," Marzouki said. —Irma Isip



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ALEX MAGNO

Shrinking

A few years from now, Manila Bay will be very different. We will sit and watch the famous sunset a little earlier, as the sun disappears behind skyscrapers rather than sink into the sea.

A slew of reclamation projects are ready to be undertaken, from the proposed airport at Sangley Point to the whole stretch of coast from Bacoor to Parañaque to the City of Manila. A long bridge is even proposed to link Cavite and Bataan. Over the next few years, the Bay will be shrinking.

Reclamation is expensive. But land prices in Mega Manila, population pressure and increasing opportunities for property developers to make profit are all pushing the reclamation projects forward.

Years ago, after writing critically of the move to reclaim more land from the Bay, I was rewarded with a long briefing given by an engineer working for one of the reclamation proponents. Having no training in engineering, I could only ask the most pedestrian questions. The blueprints he had included a plan to host massive cruise ships right next to the proposed hotels built on reclaimed land.

For instance, I asked the engineer if the proposed reclamation projects would cause the city to flood. On the contrary, he said, the projects will enhance drainage of the city streets and reduce vulnerability to flooding.

To this day, I never ceased wondering how reclamation of hundreds (maybe thousands) of hectares from the Bay might solve our flooding problems. It always seemed commonsensical to me that a free flowing Bay should drain the city better. But maybe I was being too old-fashioned.

The many reclamation projects proposed for Manila Bay moved with the political circumstances. Joseph Estrada, when he was mayor of Manila, was enthused by the possibilities offered by the reclamation projects, especially the revenues they might bring to an otherwise dying city. Rodrigo Duterte, while he was president, frowned on reclaiming from the Bay and would hear none of the proposals.

The city governments of Parañaque and Bacoor are committed to joint venture arrangements covering their part of the Bay. They are asserting their rights over those of national government policy over claiming the sea.

Today, it seems, the wind is blowing in favor of reclamation, helped by somewhat magical turns of events.

Contested

Earlier this year, Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon issued a decision rendering null and void the joint venture between the City of Manila and property developer Waterfront Manila Premier. This proposed joint venture involved reclaiming a whopping 318 hectares of Manila Bay.

In declaring the joint venture null and void, Judge Pozon in his 225-page April decision ruled the deal did not undergo competitive public bidding and failed to secure NEDA approval. It was defective from the start.



Last July, however, Judge Pozon retired. He was replaced by Judge Rommel Baybay as presiding judge of Branch 139. In just over a week since assuming the post, Judge Baybay produced a 25-page decision that set aside and vacated Judge Pozon's ruling.

Baybay's decision overturning that of his predecessor declared the Pozon ruling to be "premature." The Office of the President, said the new presiding judge, needed to be included in the case as an "indispensable party." This seems odd, considering the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) has been party to this deal.

Things began moving with indecent haste since Judge Pozon retired.

On Aug. 18, Joseph John Literal, assistant general manager at the PRA, wrote Waterfront Manila Premier informing the developer that the deadline for the payment of the regulatory fee and the balance of the Social Environment Fund has been extended. The developer is now given the leeway to begin work on their reclamation project. The PRA cites the reversal of Judge Pozon's ruling on the matter - still subject to a motion for reconsideration.

The matter might have escaped public scrutiny were it not for the objections of another group aggrieved by the rush of events. Lawyers for Asian Seas Resources and Construction Development Corporation (ASSERCO) wrote the PRA last Aug. 22 contesting the letter issued by Literal.

ASSERCO, according to media reports, is backed by another large property development company. Its own application for a reclamation project in the same area as the Waterfront project the PRA had set aside earlier. The company's lawyers questioned the authority of the assistant general manager to give Waterfront the go-ahead for the project. They wanted verification of the action of the PRA Board on the matter.

Other parties have likewise questioned the PRA's haste. The agency's Board is composed of appointees of former president Duterte. As a matter of courtesy, it is usual courtesy for holdover boards to cede major decisions to their appointed successors.

From the reversal of the original court ruling on the joint venture to the PRA's haste in getting the project started, it does appear that certain powerful interests are hurrying to seal the deal. For better or for worse, however, the matter will not be rushed.

The reversal of Judge Pozon's ruling will be contested in court. The actual PRA Board action will have to be verified and documented.

There will be enough time for other stakeholders, especially those opposing further reclamation of Manila Bay, to be involved. Those hurrying to seal the deal precisely wanted to avoid public scrutiny of the proposed joint venture.

Bringing public attention to the events of the past few weeks relating to this particular joint venture will hopefully lead to a better-considered policy on reclamation.



Pagtatayo ng mga istraktura sa baybaying dagat, ibinawal

CEBU CITY - Nagpalabas ng kautusan ang mga lokal na pamahalaan sa Cebu City na mahigpit na ipinagbabawal ang pagtatayo ng mga kahit na anong uri ng istraktura sa baybaying dagat.

Sa ipinalabas na Executive Order (EO) No. 25 ni Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, isinasaad ang pagbabawal ng pagtatayo ng istraktura sa baybaying dagat gaya ng mga floating at permanent cottage sa karagatang sakop ng naturang lungsod na isa paglabag sa batas sa kapaligiran at mga kautusang administratibo sa mga easement zone sa mga anyong tubig.

Ang naturang kautusan ay base na rin sa naunang inilabas na cease and desist order ni Cordova Mayor Cesar Suan na sinang-ayunan ng gobernador.

"The further construction and/or operation of these illegal structures are harmful to

the environment and public health, and patent violation of existing laws, rules, and regulations," ayon pa sa EO.

Natuklasan ng Provincial Environment and Natural Resources na ang mga ilegal na istrakturang nakatayo sa mga baybaying dagat ay walang maayos na pasilidad gaya ng maayos na tapunan ng basura na naging sanhi ng polusyon sa baybaying dagat.

Maging sa Ambient Coastal Water Sampling, Environmental Management Bureau ng DENR, lumabas sa kanilang pagsisiyasat na hindi maayos ang kondisyon ng tubig dulot ng mga dumi na nagmumula sa mga istraktura. Kaugnay nito, kinausap na rin ni Garcia ang PNP, Philippine Coast Guard, Naval Forces Central, at Maritime Industry Authority sa pagtulong sa pagpapatupad ng bagong kautusan na epektibo simula Agosto 29.

MARY ANNE SAPICO



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Turning climate movement on its head

First word

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OBSERVER

**YEN
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between belief and rejection of the theology of climate change should read three current articles on the climate issue that seriously place in grave doubt and suspicion the raison d'être of the UN-led climate movement.

Together, these reports bring out the latest findings and opinions of scientists and experts on the climate issue. Each article reports a major development that places the debate in a fresh light.

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■ MAKABENTA FROM A1

Turning climate movement on its head

1. "California's war on gas vehicles threatens US economy," by Shane Harris, AMAC Newswire (Aug. 27, 2022);
2. "UN's net-zero plan is the real climate catastrophe," by Duggan Flanakin, RealClear Energy website (Aug. 29, 2022);
3. "Joe Biden exacerbates America's energy crisis" by Daniel Turner, RealClear Energy website (Aug. 29, 2022).

California declares war on gas vehicles

The August 27 report of Shane Harris in AMAC Newswire shows how lunatic the California state government has become about the climate issue. He reported:

"On Thursday, August 25, California regulators voted to require that all new passenger cars and trucks sold in the state run on electricity or hydrogen after 2035, the latest move by state officials to 'phase out' the use of all gas and diesel-powered vehicles. In addition to posing a severe challenge for California's already strained power grid, the decision threatens to send the state's economy tumbling — likely taking the rest of the country with it.

The new rule, which was released by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) two years after Gov. Gavin Newsom first directed the Board to consider such a policy, was hailed as a major victory for environmental activists, even as economists and engineers expressed major reservations. According to the policy, 35 percent of new passenger vehicles sold by 2026 must produce 'zero emissions,' a requirement that climbs to 68 percent by 2030. By 2035, one-fifth of new car sales in the state can be plug-in hybrids (electric vehicles that switch over to a gas-powered engine for longer distances), but the rest must be powered solely by electricity or hydrogen.

Though California leads the country in number of registered EVs by far — more than 550,000 — that figure still pales in comparison to the more than 30 million total registered vehicles in the state. In the first three months of this year, just 16 percent of new cars sold in California were electric, a percentage that would have to more than double in just four years in order to be in compliance with the plan.

There are major doubts about whether or not California's energy grid will even be able to handle the increase in demand brought on by such a large increase in the number of EVs on the road in such a short time.

Banning gas cars in California is also likely to have ripple effects throughout the rest of the US economy... The problems that this decision poses for California are thus likely to

be exported to other states, whether they agree with the policy or not.

"With fewer gas cars on the road, many gas stations will likely go out of business, making it more difficult for those with gas cars to get around. In addition to posing a severe burden on people in rural parts of the state, this will also discourage tourism from other states, an industry that contributes more than \$100 billion annually to California's economy.

"At the same time as this policy is going into effect on passenger vehicles, a series of perhaps even more devastating laws and regulations are also set to take effect to 'phase out' medium- and heavy-duty gas- and diesel-powered trucks. On Jan. 1, 2023, some 76,000 trucks with engines built before 2010 will no longer be allowed to operate under a different set of CARB regulations. By 2040, all new medium- and heavy-duty trucks sold in the state must also be fully electric — posing an enormous cost for transportation companies, which will no doubt be passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices."

Biden worsens US energy crisis

In his August 29 article in the RealClear Energy website, "Joe Biden exacerbates America's energy crisis," Daniel Turner writes about how the Biden administration is killing or slowing down oil, natural gas and coal production by "weaponizing" agencies like the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

"The Biden Administration's war on fossil fuels is multi-pronged. Go after their financing through the ultra-woke ESG movement threatening banks from lending them the necessary capital. Go after their permitting with endless slow-walking by the bureaucrats in the Department of Interior. And go after the infrastructure by weaponizing agencies like the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by stopping pipelines and other necessary projects.

"While doing all this with one hand, you pour billions into unreliable wind and solar with the other."

Recently the American people watched Democrats in Congress jam through a massive, partisan climate change spending package. The \$69 billion law is crammed with special-interest giveaways to the green energy sector, huge sums to hire 87,000 more IRS agents, and the establishment of a national green bank. It received zero Republican support and will be a major point of contention come Election Day.

"Back in February, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or FERC, made an incredible political

power play and almost got away with it. This relatively unknown five-person commission is tasked with, among other things, regulating the transmission of natural gas. That includes the approval of new natural gas projects like pipelines. The balance of power on the commission swings as the White House changes hands, so currently there are three Democratic commissioners and just two Republicans.

"During the commission's February meeting, Richard Glick, FERC's Democratic chairman and his two fellow Democratic commissioners pushed through a policy designed to block construction of natural gas infrastructure. This rule would force private companies applying for permits to account for all greenhouse gas emissions from a pipeline project, that is, from production upstream all the way to combustion downstream. This task is basically impossible — which is the point.

"Glick and his cohort used climate change as the defense for the new rule and argued they were compelled to take this action by the courts. But that argument didn't hold water with Congress. The bipartisan leaders of the Senate energy and natural resource committee, chairman Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Ranking Member John Barrasso (R-WY), took major issue with FERC's new, completely unjustified policy. They dragged Glick and his fellow Democratic commissioners up to the committee to explain themselves."

The real catastrophe

Also in RealClear Energy, Duggan Flanakin published on August 29 a critique of the UN plan for zero emissions ("UN's net-zero plan is the real catastrophe"). He wrote:

"Putin's bloody invasion of Ukraine is an affront to humanity, given his targeting of civilians.

"But Putin's invasion may be saving Europe — and other nations — from their blind devotion to the 'climate catastrophe' movement and the worldwide push to 'Net Zero by 2050.' Even before Putin's war disrupted European energy supplies vastly increased energy costs, Europeans were suffering from senseless 'green' energy policies imposed in the name of 'saving the planet.'

"The radical Net Zero plan, crafted by the United Nations and endorsed by such entities as the World Economic Forum, would press nations to abdicate reliance on fossil fuels, nuclear energy, and even hydroelectric dams in favor of so-called 'green energy' that is not that green and does not generate and transmit reliable, affordable energy.

"Chief architects UN Secretary-

General Antonio Guterres and UN climate chief Christina Figueres crafted a plan that granted absolute dictatorial power to national governments to act under UN mandates to destroy the fossil fuel, livestock and other industries.

"Their collectivist, totalitarian plans were said to be based on claims that relatively minor increases in carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere would (according to unchecked science fiction writers) submerge the Statue of Liberty, raise sea levels to kill or displace billions, and burn up land long devoted to agriculture.

"Ordinary humans, they argued, must substitute plant-based 'meats' and eschew even seafood, drive only electric vehicles, and downsize their lifestyles (except for the elites, whose lifestyles would remain opulent).

"Signs that the scientific community may soon be ending its love affair with climate catastrophe policies come from, of all places, scientific commentaries on the brand-new Summary for Policymakers of the AR6 WGI report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). NASA climate advisor Gavin Schmidt, for example, has criticized the IPCC models as unrealistic and not backed by data.

"Maybe now the world is ready to listen to the 1,100-plus scientists and experts, led by Norwegian Nobel laureate Ivar Giaever, who signed onto the new Climate Intelligence (Clintel) statement that 'there is no climate emergency.' The independent international foundation asserts that, 'Climate science has degenerated into a discussion based on beliefs, not on sound self-critical science.'

"The just-released Intelint document states that natural as well as anthropogenic factors cause climate change, and everyone really knows that the Earth's climate has varied as long as the planet has existed — with natural cold and warm phases.

"Not only have IPCC-favored climate models exaggerated the effect of greenhouse gases (like carbon dioxide), they have also ignored the fact that enriching the atmosphere with CO2 has many benefits. The fact is that CO2 is essential for all life on Earth, and that additional CO2 in the atmosphere promotes growth in global plant biomass and increases crop yields worldwide.

"Moreover, said the scientists and experts, there is no statistical evidence that warming global temperatures have intensified hurricanes, floods, droughts, and such-like natural disasters, nor that they have made them more frequent."

yenobserver@gmail.com



Climate-smart Palawan: Creating climate resilience in the Calamianes group

STARTING this quarter, the research and scientific advocacy that my research scientists and I have done will be shared using this amazing platform. This will help to inspire more people to make a difference regardless of their status and background.

The project

Deemed to be the "hotspot" and the country's last ecological frontier, the Calamianes group (Busuanga, Coron and Culion islands) of Palawan is reliant on farming and fishery resources for livelihoods and food security. Climate change and variability, including climate hazards (e.g., tropical cyclones, flooding, sea-level rise and drought), impact the farming and fishery systems and the vulnerability of dependent communities. This project aims to investigate the worst-case scenarios that happened to these islands, which include biophysical and socioeconomic stresses as well as psychological trauma and secular activities. It also contributes to improving community adaptation schemes by characterizing, assessing and predicting the future of food resources using the simplest and uncomplicated approach — the track-risk-impact-policy (TRIP) to resiliency framework. Focusing on adaptation elucidations and strategies for enhancing climate resilience at the local level contributes to capacity development and local empowerment. Integration of natural, social and economic studies identifies a range of options for management and policy reform. These alternatives are delivered as briefing materials to managers and decision-makers in communities and society at large in the islands. The strong partnership with the local government units and other stakeholders (community of farmers, fisherfolk, Indigenous people, NGOs, academe, church, women, youth and private sector), provides strong



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scientific and political support for the development of effective science-based governance approaches, which are needed to position vulnerable communities for an improved future.

Change created

Under the project, "Climate-smart Palawan: Creating Climate Resilience in Calamianes Group of Islands," the TRIP to resiliency and sustainability framework was used to create a momentum of change not only for the islands of Calamianes but also on the other islands in Palawan. This TRIP framework was used both in the research and capacity building. This provides solutions that reduce the risks and prevent potential damage and losses in the islands. The outcomes are as follows: 1) land-zoning and new building codes have been implemented to reduce the vulnerability of the communities; 2) adjustment of the agricultural calendar per island has been executed to address the issue of food security and water sufficiency; 3) climate-proofing or climate-smart approaches for post-production management practices have been integrated into the planning and have been also taught to the communities of farmers, fishermen and Indigenous people; 4) communities have been trained to apply sustainable natural resource management in order to increase the resilience of food production; 5) renewable energy sources in the off-grid island have been identified; 6) climate-smart rainwater harvesting systems have been recommended to address the issue of water security, especially in the most remote areas; 7) gender equality



■ ECCRI research scientists John Matthew Glico, Raeyan Ramos, Marlon Co., Angelo Regalado, Victor Angelo Fuentebella and Glenn Banaguas (seated), in Calauit Island, Busuanga, Palawan.

initiatives and considerations, the use of traditional knowledge and practices on agro-biodiversity, sustainable land management (SLM) and sustainable forest management (SFM) have been strengthened; and 8) gender-responsive measures, the role of women in the development and conservation processes have been enhanced.

How resilience was built

One specific climate-related issue was a storm surge event brought by Super Typhoon "Haiyan" ("Yolanda"), which resulted in billions of pesos worth of damage and losses. More than 24,000 people in the Calamianes islands (Busuanga-Coron-Culion) were affected. People were warned, but they did not leave the place. Some thought that it was a normal tropical cyclone. And others said that they did not understand the terminologies that were used. One of the findings of our research was that there is a need to communicate "climate science and policy" to the stakeholders and their communities. There's a need to train and capacitate all the stakeholders to achieve a climate-smart and disaster-resilient Palawan. And that's the essence of the model — the "TRIP to resiliency and

sustainability framework" — from research to assessment to collaboration to implementation: 1) the research was conducted on the islands; 2) the results were presented to the decision-makers, administrators and officials for validation; 3) collaboration with the different stakeholders was established; 4) two batches of scientific capacity development and training were done; 5) science-based policies and action plans were formulated; 6) climate change adaptation programs and projects were developed and implemented; 7) climate-smart approaches were established using the "multi-stakeholder" approach; 8) monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system was jointly established; 9) linkages with the development partners were strengthened; and 10) resource mobilization was also introduced.

Glenn S. Banaguas Sci. Dpl. is a UN-Sasakawa laureate for Disaster Risk Reduction. He is a The Outstanding Filipino (TOFIL) laureate, NAST Outstanding Young Scientist of the Philippines, US-Asean science and technology fellow, EU-Asia climate diplomat, Asean science, Royal Society-The World Academy of Sciences awardee, and Asia Leaders awardee for sustainability leadership.



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Davao Oriental Governor Malanyaon sets targets to uplift province from 'poorest' rank

By MANUEL T. CAYON

@awimailbox

Mindanao Bureau Chief

DAVAO CITY—The provincial government of Davao Oriental is setting its eyes on lifting the province the dire straits, and the current priority programs would seek to cushion the continuing sore of being the

second poorest province in the Davao Region.

Governor Corazon N. Malanyaon told local chief executives that she would be tweaking her policies to "to uplift the lives of her Davao Oriental constituents, who are still reeling from the effects of the pandemic and the current inflation."

Malanyaon said she would be concentrating on Oplan Kalsada, Opera-

tion Ilaw, renewable energy and two programs she called Davao Oriental Beautiful and Nationalizing Davao Oriental Provincial Center.

The governor added she would prioritize the rehabilitation of roads particularly those leading to farms and tourist destinations as her economic development agenda centers on agriculture and tourism.

She said tourism could be a po-

tential economic driver, with her program on "Davao Oriental Beautiful," a campaign to "showcase Davao Oriental as a world-class tourism destination in the country."

"We want people to realize that we live in a really beautiful province blessed with all these natural resources," she said referring to the Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary, Mindanao's first and a

Unesco World Heritage site.

She said she has organized ten teams each with a set of heavy equipment to the 10 municipalities, taking advantage of the dry season. "Hopefully, we can deploy all equipment not later than the last week of August," she said.

On Operation Pailaw, the governor said, the provincial government and the Davao Oriental Electric Co-

operative, Inc. (Doreco) would launch a clearing operation of electric lines across the province to address frequent power outages.

Malanyaon said she hopes to improve the power supply situation in the province by tapping renewable energy. She said the province was currently discussing with a Japanese company interested in investing in a biomass powerplant.



editorial

Weather whiplash: Deadly droughts and superfloods

THE most direct impact of ice loss is the escalation of global warming. The extra heat now being absorbed by the planet where ice used to exist has intensified global warming. This year alone, we've all watched in horror as a record number of \$1 billion disasters—including wildfires, heat waves, floods, and rapidly intensifying hurricanes—devastated parts of the US and elsewhere, threatening the security of affected communities, straining agriculture and food security, and stretching relief resources. This, Senators, is the face of global warming.”

That's how Dr. Jennifer Francis, senior scientist at Woodwell Climate Research Center, described the threats to national security posed by Arctic ice loss and warming when she testified at a US Senate hearing nearly two years ago. “The impacts I've discussed are symptoms of the underlying disease. To treat the disease, we need to pull out all the stops to reduce emissions of heat-trapping gases and to remove carbon from the atmosphere via natural (such as reforestation) and technological (carbon capture) means,” she said.

Francis has started studying “weather whiplash” in 2012, to find out why global weather patterns have been swinging wildly from one extreme to another.

The World Weather Attribution initiative was started in 2014 after scientists concluded that the emerging science of extreme event attribution could be turned into measurable observations. Climate scientists at WWA provide robust assessments on the role of climate change in the aftermath of an extreme event.

AP Science writer Seth Borenstein said the scientists at WWA, mostly volunteers who quickly examine extreme weather for a climate change fingerprint, have a strict criteria of events to investigate: they have to be record-breaking, cause a significant number of deaths, or impact at least one million people. So far this year they've been swamped. He quoted a WWA official as saying there have been 41 events—eight floods, three storms, eight droughts, 18 heat waves and four cold waves—that have reached that threshold point.

In just two weeks in late July and early August, the US had 10 downpours that are only supposed to happen one percent of the time—sometimes called 1-in-100-year storms. That's not counting the Dallas region, a likely 1-in-1,000-year storm, where some places got more than nine inches of rain in 24 hours, wrote Borenstein. In the Horn of Africa in the midst of a devastating but oft-ignored famine and drought, nearby flash floods add to the humanitarian disaster unfolding. Europe, which suffered through unprecedented flooding last year, has baked with record heat compounded by a 500-year drought that is drying up rivers and threatening power supplies, the AP report said.

The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change emphasized what it called compounding weather disasters as a future threat. “Frankly how fast and how badly it's now playing out is a surprise to many of us,” said IPCC's Maarten van Aalst, director of the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre in the Netherlands. “It's scary how quickly it is appearing in front of our eyes.”



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Scientists suspect climate change is at work in two different ways. The biggest way is simple physics. As the atmosphere warms it holds more water (7 percent more for every degree Celsius), scientists said. Think of the air as a giant sponge, said UCLA and Nature Conservancy climate scientist Daniel Swain. It soaks up more water from parched ground like a sponge "which is why we're seeing worse droughts in some places," he said. Then when a weather system travels further, it has more to dump, causing downpours.

Another factor is the stuck and wavier jet stream—the atmospheric river that moves weather systems around the world—said Francis of Woodwell Climate Research Center. Storm systems don't move and just dump huge amounts of water in some places. Other places, like China, are stuck with hot weather as cooler, wetter weather moves around them.

From the Associated Press: "Deaths from widespread flooding in Pakistan topped 1,000 since mid-June, officials said Sunday, as the country's climate minister called the deadly monsoon season "a serious climate catastrophe". The unprecedented monsoon season has affected all four of the country's provinces. Nearly 300,000 homes have been destroyed, numerous roads rendered impassable and electricity outages have been widespread, affecting millions of people."

Extreme weather events are getting more extreme in all parts of the world. As Francis has told the US Senate, "we need to pull out all the stops to reduce emissions of heat-trapping gases and to remove carbon from the atmosphere". There's an urgent need to deliver the same message to all governments and leaders of the world.



The future is bright for clean energy and transportation in the country

WITH all the local and international push and support for the institutionalization of "sustainable growth" using renewable energy sources, the Philippines is now on an upward motion towards a climate-resilient and climate-smart Philippines.

Through the leadership of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the entire bureaucracy is now being led toward a more climate-care-sensitive and energy-efficient direction. The Climate Change Commission (CCC) is the lead policymaking body of the government tasked to coordinate, monitor and evaluate government programs and ensure mainstreaming of climate change in national, local and sectoral development plans toward a climate-resilient and climate-smart Philippines. The Climate Change Commission has now found itself playing a major role in one of the priority thrusts of the administration of President Marcos. It is only fitting that the chairman of the CCC is none other than the President himself. He is also joined by a well-balanced group of expert diplomats, lawyers and environmental planners. One of its commissioners is well known to me, Commissioner Albert de la Cruz, who has been one of the foremost expert environmental planners and renewable energy advocates in our country for many years now. I have known him to be a principled and effective government servant. With the President at the helm and with a competent team behind him, the prospects of



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the climate change campaign of the country are surely very promising.

One important development toward sustainability on which the country is now gaining a lot of ground is on the transition of vehicles into electric. This holds true for both the public and private sector.

The electric vehicle (EV) is nothing new in the Philippines although its popularity has been limited because in the past the cost was simply too high. But this is no longer the case today. One can strongly argue now that it is worth buying an electric car especially with the sky rocketing prices of fuel. On the other hand, purchasing an EV will absolutely save you more money.

Notwithstanding the initial up-front cost, the EV owner will eventually recover and even save more during the EV's useful life.

More and more people today have been bitten by the EV bug as many have already replaced their gas- or diesel-consuming vehicles with EVs. It is a certainty that as technology improves, the cost of owning one will also be much less as the supply will also increase. It



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would not be far-fetched to say that the EVs popularity among the working class would be expected to increase as access and affordability become more prevalent. Needless to say, electric vehicles will continue to look more attractive when juxtaposed against the rising oil prices.

According to studies, the global market for EVs has been growing at a compounded annualized growth rate (CAGR) of 21.7 percent, and by 2030 it is projected to balloon from 8.1 million units to 39.21 million.

One of the most important developments in the Philippines when it comes to electric vehicles are the recent legislations. On April 13, 2022, Republic Act 11697, or what is commonly known as the "Electric Vehicle Industry Development Act" (Evida), became effective. The Evida Law outlines the regulatory framework and creates a comprehensive road map for the operation of EVs in the Philippines.

To ensure that the objective of developing the electric vehicle industry is achieved, the Evida Law also mandated the creation of a Comprehensive Roadmap for the Electric Vehicle Industry, or Crevi, which will be the national road map and development plan for the EV industry to accelerate the development, commercialization and utilization of EVs in the country. It was also stated that the "Crevi shall be incorporated in the Philippine Energy Plan and the National Transport Policy."

According to the law, the Crevi shall

include four important aspects and components: 1) EVs and charging stations; 2) manufacturing; 3) research and development; and 4) human resource development.

It also tasked the Department of Energy (DoE) to come up with uniform and streamlined rules and regulations on the use and maintenance of charging stations and related equipment. The DoE and the other government offices and stakeholders are now hard at work to come up with the IRR of this important legislation.

Related to the implementation of the Evida Law, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) recently reminded the public that electric vehicle registration is a requirement and that it covers all electric-powered vehicles. Accordingly, even e-bikes now require LTO registration.

But one of the best parts of the Evida Law is the offer of several key tax incentives to businesses in the EV industry. These innovations in the law are expected to create more opportunities for the manufacturers of EVs and support the creation of the necessary infrastructure for EVs in the Philippines.

Businessmen and investors must really be encouraged to join the government's push towards sustainability and clean energy source development.

Indeed, the future is bright for clean energy and transportation because of EVs in the country.



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Env'l disasters:

constant affliction in our lives

As the world gradually recovers from the massive havoc caused by the pandemic, mankind is being subjected next to multiple devastations caused by extreme weather conditions. These environmental disasters have probably occurred without interruption during the past two years, but they were merely overshadowed by the health crisis. As our attention becomes less focused on COVID-19, we are again noticing that our planet is being baked dry in so many parts, and drowned in many other parts.

China is experiencing an extreme and extended heat wave and drought, resulting in a slowdown of its economy. The scorching heat wave has brought an unprecedented temperature of 45 degrees Celsius in some parts, igniting wildfires. The drought has dried up so many rivers and reservoirs. With major cities dependent on rivers for hydroelectric power, transportation, and water for farms and communities, factories, and manufacturing plants have shut down for lack of power, cities are experiencing rolling blackouts, river transports are unable to move cargo across the country, fields and orchards are wilting, and communities are in dire need for alternate sources of tap water, reports The New York Times.

Pakistan, which shares a border with China, is experiencing catastrophic floods described as "monsoon on steroids." Not less than 95,350 houses have been destroyed, and 224,100 more have been damaged, more than 504,000 livestock have been killed, nearly 3,000 kilometers of roads and 129 bridges have been damaged, according to Reuters. At least 33 million people have been impacted by floods, representing 15 percent of Pakistan's population, at least



FLEA MARKET OF IDEAS

JOEL RUIZ BUTUYAN

1,136 people have been killed, and damage estimates are at least \$10 billion.

Europe is experiencing drought described as "the worst in at least 500 years," according to a Global Drought Observatory report. Sixty-four percent of Europe is under some sort of drought warning, with 47 percent of the continent in "warning" conditions, which means soil has dried up, and another 17 percent is on alert, which means vegetation "shows signs of stress," the report says. Nearly all of Europe's rivers have dried up to some extent, with hydroelectric power dropping to 20 percent. The forecast is that the continent's harvest for corn will be down by 16 percent, soybeans by 15 percent, and sunflower by 12 percent.

Other countries that have experienced environmental disasters this year include, among many others, the following: South Africa whose severe flooding is described as the "country's worst natural disaster on record;" Chile which is experiencing a massive drought described as the longest and most severe in

the country in more than 1,000 years, and; Australia which has alternating drought and floods whose severity have been described as "without precedent over the past 400 years."

Except for Severe Tropical Storm "Florita," which caused substantial damage to a swath of Luzon island a few days ago, the Philippines has largely been spared, so far this year, of the kind of extreme weather conditions that have battered the countries earlier mentioned. However, severe flooding has been experienced by several of our urban centers even if they've been due merely to flash floods. As I write, a supertyphoon will graze the Philippine Sea, and although it will not hit any of our islands, the increasing frequency of a supertyphoon in our vicinity will constantly terrorize us like a Russian roulette.

The consequences of the severe environmental disasters in other parts of the world will hurt our country in an impactful way. The resulting shortages in staples like corn, wheat, sugar, rice, soybeans, and sunflower oil supplies, and the increased demand for fuel for power generation, will distress us with high prices. If we are experiencing shortages and high prices now because of the Russia-Ukraine war, the yearly occurrence of environmental disasters that are getting stronger and stronger threaten to normalize these high prices.

The COVID-19 pandemic will probably bug us for a year or two more. But the devastation and destruction that will be caused by the increasing frequency and severity of environmental disasters threaten to become a constant affliction in our lives.

Comments to fleamarketofideas@gmail.com



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DOE REVIEW OF MALAMPAYA SALE TO RAZON 'ON TRACK'

By Jordeene B. Lagare
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The ongoing review of Enrique Razon Jr.-led Prime Infrastructure Capital Inc.'s acquisition of a controlling stake in the Malampaya gas project is "on track," according to the Department of Energy (DOE).

As part of the decision-making process, the DOE has tapped several technical, financial and legal advisers to help them look into certain aspects of the proposed sale.

"Just to assure you that the review by the PNOEC Exploration Corp. (PNOEC-EC) on Prime Infra's acquisition is on track and, the notification to the DOE, having been received, is also moving in parallel," Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said in a virtual briefing held on Wednesday.

The DOE indicated last week it would decide within the year on Razon's, planned

takeover of the Malampaya gas field and the PNOEC-EC would likely give its consent to Shell's sale of its Malampaya interest.

Lotilla said the advisers are expected to aid the DOE so that the decisions relative to the Malampaya deep water gas-to-power project "consider all the relevant factors and are founded on sound technical analyses."

Rufino Bomasang will lead the Technical Review Committee, along with Francisco Delphin Jr. and Froilan Tampinco as members and Edgar Benedict Cutiongco as a consultant.

Roberto Manabat will head the Financial Review Committee, with J. Carlitos Cruz and Gabriel Singson Jr. as members and lawyer Ephyro Luis Amatong as a consultant.

Another lawyer, Luis Ma. Uranza, will act as a consultant for the legal aspect of the transaction. **INQ**



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P2.65B RAISED FOR MERALCO, MITSUI'S 75-MW RIZAL SOLAR FARM

By **Jordeene B. Lagare**
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The partnership of Manila Electric Co. and Japan-based Mitsui Group obtained P2.65-billion in fresh funds to develop a 75-megawatt solar power project in Baras, Rizal.

MGEN Renewable Energy Inc. (MGreen), through its subsidiary PH Renewables Inc. (PHRI), tapped a 15-year term project financing from Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.

RCBC Capital Corp. will serve as arranger for this transaction.

PHRI—the joint venture of MGreen, the renewable energy unit of Meralco PowerGen Corp. (MGen), and Mitsui & Co. subsidiary Mit-Renewables Philippine Corp.—is constructing the facility at the grounds of Philippine Communications Satellite Corp.

Sustainability initiatives

Commercial operations of the solar project are slated within the first quarter of 2023. Upon completion, it will supply renewable energy to MPower, Meralco's local retail electricity supply arm.

"We look forward to taking part in this evolving energy landscape as we move

towards our target of building 1,500 MW of renewable energy over the next seven years," said Jaime Azurin, president and CEO of MGen.

"We are fully committed to building a greener future by actively funding renewable energy projects, consistent with our sustainability initiatives," RCBC president and CEO Eugene Acevedo said.

RCBC Capital president and CEO Jose Luis Gomez, for his part, said this undertaking "greatly benefits the country and the environment in general."

Aside from the Rizal solar project, PHRI is building a 45-MW solar project in Cordon, Isabela.

MGreen has a 51-percent equity stake in PowerSource First Bulacan Solar Inc., which started May last year the operations of the 55-MW solar farm in San Miguel, Bulacan.

Also, MGreen and leading renewable energy company in the Asia-Pacific region, Vena Energy, began working on a 68-MW solar project in Ilocos Norte.

MGen's power generation portfolio currently has a total gross capacity of 2,446 MW that utilizes coal, liquified natural gas, diesel and solar technologies. **INQ**